

#201: OCTOBER 24–NOVEMBER 23 A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

THE INDYPENDENT

MEXICO MURDER MYSTERY, P14 | THE NEW FACEBOOK? P22



ROB LAQUINTA

EPIDEMIC OF FEAR

THE PLAGUE THAT'S WORSE THAN EBOLA

NICHOLAS POWERS, P4



GREEN PARTY RISING
P6



AFTER THE CLIMATE
MARCH, P8



FERGUSON PHOTO
ESSAY, P12



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OCT/NOV

THROUGH NOV 16

Various times • Free
EXHIBITION: “SELF-DETERMINATION
INSIDE/OUT.” Recasting the history
of the prison-industrial complex, this
exhibition features cultural materials
produced by incarcerated people and
their allies. Subjects include the Attica
Rebellion, political imprisonment, AIDS
education, prisoners-as-laborers, the
struggles of incarcerated women and
queer people, prison hunger strikes and
more.
Interference Archive
131 8th St, #4, Bklyn
interferencearchive.org

MON OCT 27

7pm • Free
DISCUSSION: *THE COMING SWARM.*
Author Molly Sauter and other panelists
will lead a discussion about online activ-
ism. Sauter is the author of *The Coming
Swarm: DDOS Actions, Hacktivism and
Civil Disobedience on the Internet.*
Bluestockings Bookstore & Café
172 Allen St
212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

WED OCT 29

7pm • Free
DISCUSSION: CAN THE LEFT TAKE
OVER THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY? A
discussion of progressives’ strategy to
push the Democratic Party to the left.
The discussion will include the roles of
activists and political actors such as
Bill de Blasio, Elizabeth Warren and the
Working Families Party.
Queens Pride House
76-11 37th Ave, 2nd Fl
Jackson Heights, Queens
nycsocialist.org

SAT NOV 1

12-6pm • Free

PARTY: 2ND ANNUAL NUYORICAN
BLOCK PARTY. Celebrate the 41st an-
niversary of the Nuyorican Poets Café
at this community block party. Enjoy an
afternoon of poetry readings, musical
performances, food and carnival games
while honoring this long-standing hub of
cultural creativity.
East 3rd St btw Aves B & C
212-780-9386 • nuyorican.org

SAT NOV 8

1-3:30pm • \$5
WORKSHOP: FOOD WASTE REDUCTION
AND COMPOSTING IN THE CITY. A
workshop on composting options in the
city along with education relating to the
processes of transferring leftover food
into usable soil. Registration is required
at lesecologycenter.org.
Dana Discovery Center, Central Park
110th St Between 5th Ave & Lenox
212-477-4022 • lesecologycenter.org

SUN NOV 9

10:30am-3:30pm • Suggested donation
\$20/\$40/\$80
WALKING TOUR: THE MANHATTANIZA-
TION OF BROOKLYN. The upscaling of
Brooklyn has been on planners’ drawing
boards for decades, and over the last
decade, their dreams have been coming
true. Led by journalist Doug Henwood,
the tour will explore the strategy behind
the transformation. All donations go to
benefit the Marxist Education Project.
Meetup at the Hungry Ghost Café
647 Fulton St, Bklyn
thecommonsbrooklyn.org

MON NOV 10

7pm • \$15/\$10 student
PANEL: TOWARD A POST-CARBON
NYC. Hurricane Sandy dramatically
exposed New York’s vulnerability to the
ravages of climate change. Panelists will

explore city-level efforts to reduce car-
bon emissions and fossil fuel consump-
tion, adapt to climate change and ensure
infrastructure resiliency.
International Center of Photography
1133 Ave of the Americas
212-857-0000 • icp.org

FRI NOV 14

6:30-9pm • Free
COMMUNITY VOICES: BRONX STORIES.
Storytellers, poets and musicians will
raise their voices to challenge the ste-
reotypes of the Bronx. The event will end
with an open mic in which the audience
is encouraged to contribute stories,
poems and songs.
Bronx Museum, 2nd Fl
1040 Grand Concourse, Bx
718-681-6000 • bronxmuseum.org

SAT NOV 15

6pm • \$150
GALA: PATHMAKERS TO PEACE.
Brooklyn for Peace will honor celebrated
public intellectual Noam Chomsky and
commemorate its 30th anniversary with
a reception and gala dinner. Chomsky
will give the keynote address and dinner
and drinks will be provided.
Plymouth Church
57 Orange St, Bklyn
718-624-5921 • brooklynpeace.org

SUN NOV 16

2:30pm • Various
FILM PREMIERE: THE HAND THAT
FEEDS. A group of undocumented low-
wage workers at an Upper East Side deli
risk deportation by forming an indepen-
dent union and fighting for a contract.
Will they win? Premiers as part of the
DOC NYC festival, running Nov. 13-20.
IFC Center
323 6th Ave
thehandthatfeedsfilm.com • docnyc.net

SAT NOV 22

8pm • \$18
MUSIC: PEOPLES’ VOICE CAFE 35TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. After
opening its doors in 1979, Peoples’ Voice
is still going strong. Come have a ball
with the special program of perform-
ers, including Sally Campbell, Mike
Glick, Judy Gorman, Barry Kornhauser,
The Ray Korona Band, Susan Lippman,
Bruce Markow, Peter Pasco, Anne Price,
Professor Louie, Rachel Stone and Steve
Suffet.
Peoples’ Voice Café
40 E 35th St
212-787-3903 • peoplesvoicecafe.org



**CONGRATULATIONS TO
INDYPENDENT STALWARTS ANNA
GOLD AND SAM ALCOFF ON THE
BIRTH OF THEIR SECOND CHILD, NINA
SIMONE HARRIET ALCOFF, BORN
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014!**

COMING SOON! <<<<<<<<

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 EBOLA AS FANTASY

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

Ebola gives life to the right-wing fantasy of pristine whiteness and the menace posed to it by the wretched of the Earth.



6 THIRD PARTY BREAKTHROUGH?

BY JOHN TARLETON

With growing support from the traditional Democratic Party base, the Green candidate for governor, Howie Hawkins, is poised to make the strongest showing of any independent third party candidate in New York State history.



8 MANY PATHS OF ACTION

A half-dozen climate activists discuss ways to continue working for climate justice now that the People's Climate March is over.



10 INTERVIEW WITH LESLIE CAGAN

BY JOHN TARLETON

A key People's Climate March organizer offers a behind-the-scenes look at how the historic event came together.

11 SUBWAY SURVEILLANCE

BY REBECA IBARRA

The MTA plans to install surveillance cameras inside more than 900 subway cars. Will this initiative do more harm than good?



12 FERGUSON PHOTO ESSAY

BY ELLEN DAVIDSON

Two months after the police killing of Michael Brown, protests continue in Ferguson, Missouri.



14 A SHOCKING CRIME ROCKS MEXICO

BY HÉCTOR AGREDANO RIVERA

The killing and kidnapping of dozens of teachers' college students have sparked nationwide protests.



16 THE FRENCH DISCONNECTION

BY ANNA POLONYI

François Hollande had promised to safeguard France's generous welfare state. Then the Socialist president did an about-face.



20 STANLEY ARONOWITZ DOES IT AGAIN

BY MICHAEL HIRSCH

In his new book author and agitator Stanley Aronowitz insists labor's future lies in taking bold action on behalf of all workers.



21 LOOKING BACK

BY MIKE NEWTON

Ralph Fascanella's fondness for the working class New York of his youth shines through in an exhibit at the American Folk Art Museum.

22 HOW IDEALISTIC IS ELLO?

BY ALEX ELLEFSON

Ello is a new social networking site that vows it will not sell user info to advertisers. So what do its venture capital investors want?



FEAR FACTOR

EBOLA AND THE POLITICS OF PARANOIA

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

When he coughed, I flinched. As the train left Jamaica Station, I studied the people with airport luggage. What if one of them has Ebola? The deadly virus has spread through Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and was carried by an infected jet passenger to Dallas, where he died. Then, a doctor was diagnosed with it right here in New York. Had it spread? Was it on this train? Shaking my head, I realized that we're infected with something worse than Ebola.

Paranoia is the first symptom of a plague. When news of an infectious disease like Ebola, SARS or swine flu breaks, the risks quickly ignite underlying social fears that themselves become a danger. When the disease passes, carrying off however many or few to an early death, what remains is the bigotry. Today it is West African immigrants, yesterday it was gay men during the HIV panic and hundreds of years ago, during the Black Death of the 14th century, it was Jews.

Throughout history, terrified people have hidden behind barricades and turned on scapegoats. It's happening again as conservatives sound alarms about Ebola. They want to stop flights from West Africa. And seal the border with Mexico. They demand we become Fortress America. And build walls to quarantine the sick. But it's exactly those "walls," whether physical, psychological or both, that cause unnecessary mass death.

On the other side, trapped in quarantine, are panicked people trying to escape. If they see no hope, no new doctors or hospitals, they will run. And when they do, it will make contact tracing nearly impossible. They need intervention, not isolation. The World Health Organization (WHO) warned that by December, the outbreak could pick up pace to 10,000 new cases a week. By January, it's possible that 1.4 million people will be infected. And if the mortality rate stays at 70 percent, we're looking at the death of roughly a million human beings. If they die, it won't be from Ebola but from the politics of fear.

ORIGINS OF THE DISEASE

December 2013 — in the Guinean village of Meliandou, a 2-year-old boy vomits into

Discovered in 1976, Ebola first broke out in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formally known as Zaire). Each epidemic begins with fruit bats, which are immune to the virus but act as its natural reservoir. Ebola spreads from them after they drop partly-eaten fruit that is then polished off by grazing animals like gorillas, that in turn are hunted and eaten by humans. Or directly, when the bats are caught and eaten by people.

Since 1976 at least fifteen Ebola outbreaks have been recorded. Three of these were major ones. In 1995, the virus killed 254 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Five years later another outbreak in Uganda took 224. Since then there have been only sporadic and smaller incidents, until now. As of this writing, the WHO reports nearly 10,000 cases and almost 5,000 deaths. But the WHO and other governmental institutions openly acknowledge this is an underestimation. The real number many be many times more and the transmission rate is growing exponentially.

As deadly as it is, one reason Ebola has not become an epidemic until now is because it is actually hard to catch. Direct contact with an infected person's bodily fluids — blood, feces, vomit, semen, mucus, sweat, tears, breast milk or urine — is the method of transmission. If the virus gets into orifices like the nose, mouth, eyes, vagina or anus, or in open wounds, then you get infected.

The first symptoms are fatigue, fever and aching joints. They appear between two to 21 days after exposure, and after that it becomes possible to infect others. An infected individual will then feel chest pain and shortness of

itself but the political and economic history surrounding it. We are not dealing with an End Times plague but with the lottery of death.

THE PETRI DISH OF DISASTER

"EBOLA IS REAL," read the sign. On the rain-swept streets of Monrovia, Liberia, people see bright street murals warning of the virus and detailing its symptoms. When *Vice News* reporter Danny Gold went to visit the city's Redemption Hospital, his

cameraman recorded corpses covered with cardboard in the street. At the hospital's entrance, an Ebola-stricken man lay in the latrine.

"Everything is completely overwhelmed," Gold said as looked at the camera, eyes knotted with frustration. "There is just a complete shortage of medical professionals, health care facilities, of space to treat this disease." Behind his simple statement is an unspoken history, which is that Western imperialism has made Africa into a petri dish of disaster.

The first social condition of this outbreak is the centuries of imperialism, neocolonialism, civil war and local corruption that left West African infrastructure in tatters. The D.C.-based think tank Fund for Peace, which assesses the security environment of developing countries, put Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone near the bottom of its Fragile States index. These nations have weak central governments, porous borders, sparse public services, high crime and precarious economies. The Ebola pandemic is not a biological disaster, it's a political one.

In the wake of poverty comes food scarcity. If one of the main disease vectors for Ebola is infected bushmeat, monkey and bat specifically, then the repeated danger of outbreak will only be curbed when people have a secure food supply. The *Vice News* segment *Monkey Meat and the Ebola Outbreak in Liberia* showed that despite a government ban, a whole warehouse of illegal bushmeat was for sale. "If you can't eat certain kinds of meat," Jefferson Coleman, a Liberian, said, "you are going to put a lot of people out of business."

Deforestation is the other element. In the new millennium's scramble for Africa, huge swaths of forest have been sawed down. Armies of men have cut Guinea's forest to one-fifth its original size, half of Liberia's



ANDY PUGH

AS DEADLY AS IT IS, EBOLA HAS NOT BECOME AN EPIDEMIC UNTIL NOW BECAUSE IT IS ACTUALLY HARD TO CATCH.

his hands. He is cradled by his mother, who washes him down as his eyes flutter. Days after he dies, she is coughing up blood and stumbling in a fever haze in the street. Later, her body is handled by family and friends, who prepare it for a funeral. Mourners come to pay their respects, and many unwittingly carry the Ebola virus away with them.

A team of researchers, led by Fabian Leendertz of the Robert Koch Institute of Berlin, mapped the current outbreak to a bat colony near the village. They think that the young boy was bitten by one and became infected.

breath and may get a skin rash. Ebola drills microscopic holes in the capillaries, causing the body to bleed internally. They may cough up blood. The whites of the eyes may go red.

The mortality rate of Ebola can be anywhere from 25 to 90 percent, depending on how developed the health care infrastructure in the location of the outbreak is. Treatment is only symptomatic. Doctors can't cure the virus but only stabilize the body with hydrotherapy and plasma and blood transfusions. All of this means that the final tally of who lives and who dies is not about the disease

forest has been sold to logging companies and Sierra Leone is at risk of becoming a bald wasteland. As people drive deeper into the woods to mine, log and clear land for crops, human beings become more exposed to bats and monkeys that may have Ebola.

Another social condition worsening the epidemic is that people in fragile states are often deeply suspicious of their governments. Years of struggle for power among ethnic groups has left many governments washed in blood, and without a popular mandate, governments are seen as a tool of the few. When they do have legitimacy, hollowed-out infrastructure systems and endemic corruption make it nearly impossible for health agencies to spread news to people quickly and effectively. And even when they can, they must often do it painstakingly via radio, murals or word of mouth, since the literacy rates in the three hardest-hit countries are so low. In Guinea it is 41 percent, Liberia 60 percent and Sierra Leone 35 percent.

All of this creates a powder keg of fear and rage. Monrovia's largest slum, West Point, was put in quarantine when Ebola was detected there. When the nearly 80,000 residents woke up to nests of barbed wire and soldiers, they reacted by rioting in the streets, some shouting, "There is no Ebola."

Finally, in the Global North the neoliberal push for privatizing social services and the market focus on profitable medicines has stalled the search for an Ebola vaccine. In a vicious cycle, government agencies are defunded and then with a skeletal staff are expected to operate fully. When they can't, the blame is put on them, not the budget cuts. Dr. Frances Collins, head of the National Institutes of Health, recently said, "Frankly if we had not gone through our 10-year slide in research support, we probably would have had a vaccine in time for this."

Dressed like astronauts, doctors and nurses in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are fighting to keep patients from dying. Baking inside their protective gear, they see new waves of sick and panicked people arriving at their doorsteps every day. In the slums, more and more of the dead are found in the streets. And none of this, none of this had to happen.

THE TWO FACES OF PARANOIA

"They don't come close to me anymore. They don't want to shake my hand," said Jonathan King, a Liberian in Staten Island, during an NBC interview. Ebola has already hit New York. Not only one case of the virus, but the fear of it.

Nearly every single day the *New York Post* and *Daily News* are screaming about Ebola. If it's not a front page headline exclaiming "Ebola Here!" in reference to infected New York doctor Craig Spencer, it's about low-paying screener jobs at the airport. The paper joins the rising chorus of right-wing hysteria about the disease propagated by Fox News, the *National Review*, Rush Limbaugh and so many others. Racial paranoia, sometimes disguised, sometimes overt, runs through their commentary. The common theme is that the first Black president is exposing America to the diseased Global South in revenge for white supremacy.

"Obama doesn't want America to believe that we're exceptional. He wants us to be just like everybody else," said Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative icon who campaigned against the Equal Rights Amendment, in an interview with the right-wing *World Net Daily*. "If Africa is suffering from Ebola, we ought to join the group and be suffering from it, too. That's his attitude."

The fantasy of Black revenge pulses from the far right to the center-right. Laura Ingraham, a Fox News pundit, said on ABC's *This Week with George Stephanopoulos* that Obama hasn't banned flights from West Africa due to his

"familial connection with Africa." The Ebola crisis is the site where fears of a rising tide of people of color, engulfing the City on a Hill, is rendered legible and concealed at the same time. The implicit conflict is between the wretched of the Earth and the pristine whites whose skin is the illuminating beacon of civilization.

At the most obscene end, racial paranoia becomes genocidal. "I rather admire the efficiency of Ebola. From a Malthusian and marketing perspective it's beyond reproach," said British television personality and weekly *Sun* columnist Katie Hopkins. Her racial cleansing rhetoric was echoed by Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder of France's far-right party *Front National*, who advocated Ebola as way to deal with the "population explosion" and France's "immigration problem." Mischievously, he said, "Monsieur Ebola could sort that out in three months."

Plague paranoia runs both ways, going from the privileged to the oppressed and back again. In a bottom-up fantasy of omnipotent evil, one that mirrors the racial paranoia of the right wing, Minister Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, wrote in the *Final Call* that Ebola was designed to kill Black people.

"What is the method that they [the U.S. government] are going to use to depopulate [the world]?" he asked. Among the tactics he suggests are under consideration is "disease infection through bio-weapons such as Ebola and AIDS, which are race targeting weapons." He went on to say that it would exterminate Black people but leave whites untouched. Following him, singer and domestic abuse expert, Chris Brown tweeted, "I don't know ... But I think this Ebola epidemic

THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE NARRATIVE IS CURRENTLY THE DOMINANT FANTASY NARRATIVE, SO WHEN EBOLA BROKE OUT, IT WAS AS IF THAT IMAGINARY WORLD BROKE INTO OUR REAL ONE.

is a form of population control. S-t is getting crazy bruh."

In a YouGov poll, 59 percent of African-Americans think more would have been done to fight Ebola if had begun in Europe. Some Black people see it as a terrifying agent of destruction that continues older biological attacks like the Tuskegee Experiment. In it, rural Blacks were given syphilis by the U.S. Department of Health, and then left untreated.

Ebola, deadly as it is, becomes deadlier when viewed through the lens of racial warfare that these two opposing ideologies share. The implications were clearly demonstrated in Nzerekore, a small village in Guinea, when eight aid workers arrived to raise awareness about Ebola. The villagers, scared that the aid workers were bringing the disease, hacked them down with machetes. Their mutilated bodies were found in the latrine days later.

AMERICAN CINEMA AND THE PLAGUE

"First Ebola Zombie Captured," shouted the *Big American News* headline. On the web page, a half-rotted Black man with tangled dreads stared out in hopeless, half-dead agony. It was official. The zombie apocalypse was here.

Of course it was a hoax. The image was doctored. It was a mash-up between a zombie from the film *World War Z* and a zombie mask sculpture. But not long ago an October 2 ABC report showed a man, thought dead on the streets of Monrovia, be wrapped up by a full-suited burial crew and then begin, limply, to move back to life.

Why is fear so contagious? Ebola will ultimately be contained or tragically burn itself out among the poor. It is not a species threat. And yet the waves of terror sweeping across

the world have already moved us rightward, reinforcing a conservative vision across the divide between the Third and First Worlds.

One answer is that we are living in an era of austerity whose drama of scarcity is translated in art through zombie and apocalyptic narratives. The transformation of the living to the rotting, smelly and hungry undead is a representation of the social trauma of people losing their class status and plummeting into poverty. Until the taboo of openly questioning capitalism is finally and fully purged, these cinematic fantasies will bandage that trauma with supernatural imagery.

The zombie apocalypse narrative is currently the dominant fantasy narrative, so when Ebola broke out, it was as if that imaginary world broke into our real one. In a suspension of disbelief, the pandemic we long imagined appeared in news headlines. It's as if we were suddenly thrown into the series *The Walking Dead* or *Contagion*.

The emotional engine of the zombie End Times plot is that we must kill those we love because they've changed into the undead. The lesson is that to survive in the new dystopia, we must be cold and cruel enough to kill. After the lights of the film or computer screen fade and we walk outside, the narrative of survival scarcity may become our political response to a world filled with the poor and desperate, until we get infected too.

THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL HEALTH

"Life is rough, and then you die," Dr. Soka Moses said at the JFK Ebola Treatment Center in Liberia during a CNN

interview. "If we don't do it, who will do it for us? We have to take the risk."

In the report, a nurse allowed the news crew to fix a camera on his head. Inside the treatment center, a half-conscious man turned on his stretcher, arm flopping out as the nurse injected him with blood. In the hallways, people lay on mats, hovering between life and death. The staff fights to keep them alive, but no matter how much they do, the corpses pile up.

Ebola will come and go but our response will linger long after. It will set the precedent for how we will deal with the next pandemic. And there will be a next one. Climate change is throwing the ecosystem into chaos, our use of antibiotics has hit a wall and more people live in cities and the surrounding slums than at any other time in history. We are all interconnected by trade and travel, yet we live with ossified political and economic structures like the nation and the corporation. It is in a crisis moment like this that our humanity is tested. We don't have to turn away. We can do what Moses is doing with his patients — put our comfort and safety at risk to recreate that same comfort and safety for many others.

Here, in the Global North, the first step is to turn away from the racialized apocalyptic fantasy and see the humanity of those who are suffering. "Working in a high-risk zone is highly dangerous," Moses said. "You have so many patients in agony. And you see some patients and they are dying, all you can do is watch them die. You pray for them and hope that something miraculous happens."

MEET THE ANTI-CUOMO

By JOHN TARLETON

Sitting in the messy living room of a Park Slope brownstone 11 days before he was scheduled to take the stage with Andrew Cuomo in the only televised debate in this year's New York governor's race, UPS truck loader Howie Hawkins pondered how he would best convey his energy policy in 60 seconds or less.

Hawkins, who is running again this year as the Green Party candidate for governor, dove into the topic by describing his plan to convert the state to 100 percent renewable energy sources in 15 years. This plan, he insisted, would address climate change, generate millions of new jobs and cut electric rates in half.

"It's a no-brainer." He said, chopping the air with his left hand. "Except that too many of our politicians have been bought off by the oil and gas industry and are pandering to the people who pay for their campaigns."

Hawkins, a soft-spoken man with a silver beard and a thoughtful demeanor, was told he finished his answer six seconds late. However, his advisors were more concerned about the hand chops distracting television viewers and making the candidate look "strident."

So what was a better approach?

"You don't want to be robotic," said one advisor.

"He wants to be conversational," said Green Party State Co-Chair Gloria Mattera.

"He wants to be charming," added Mark Dunlea, a longtime friend of Hawkins.

"And seductive," Mattera chimed in again.

Hawkins grinned sheepishly. "Every time I think 'be charming,'" he confessed, "it makes me smile. I think *'Oh, right.'*"

"Well, think it about 20 more times," Dunlea said.

SURPRISE STORY

Actually, Hawkins and his supporters have quite a lot to be smiling about, as he has emerged as the surprise story of this fall's otherwise desultory race for the most important political office in the state.

The Greens have existed on the farthest margins of New York politics for most of the past two decades, rarely cracking one percent in statewide races. They also remain stigmatized in some liberal circles for Ralph Nader's role in helping to tip Florida and the 2000 presidential race to George W. Bush. Yet, by mid-October Hawkins, who is on unpaid leave this fall from his job at a UPS shipping hub in Syracuse, had climbed to 9 percent in statewide polls. He also began to pick up an unprecedented string of endorsements from several liberal Democratic Party clubs in New York City and a half-dozen teacher union locals across the state, including the Buffalo Teachers Federation, as well as a handful of minor Democratic Party officeholders, all of whom share a deep disenchantment with the incumbent governor.

"Astorino has hit a ceiling. Cuomo is going down. And, we're going up," Hawkins crowed while introducing himself to voters outside the Park Slope Farmers' Market.

Hawkins' debate prep session was squeezed into the middle of a hectic Sunday three weeks out from Election Day. In addition to debate prep and a trip to the farmers' market, the candidate would meet with members of a liberal Democratic club considering its first-ever endorsement of a non-Democrat and attend three house parties thrown by supporters, all while being followed around by this reporter.

The candidate's platform — a ban on fracking, a \$15 minimum wage, a substantial increase in taxes on wealthy New Yorkers, a single-payer health care system, fully funded public schools and an end to high-stakes standardized testing — smartly combines environmental and social justice themes in a way that allows him to reach more voters.

The centerpiece of Hawkins' campaign is a plan for a "Green New Deal" that would use revenues from substantially increased taxes on the wealthy to bankroll the state's transition to 100 percent renewable energy sources by 2030. Hawkins says his plan, which is based on a peer-reviewed report by Stanford professor Mark Jacobson, would create 4.5 million new jobs and end unemployment in the state.

"When you keep reminding people about the Green New Deal, you remind them of what the Democrats no longer are," added Tony Gronowicz, a historian and former Green Party mayoral candidate in New York City who teaches at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

In contrast to generic corporate politicians like Cuomo and Rob Astorino, the Westchester County executive who is running as the Republican nominee, Hawkins' biography is rife with interesting paradoxes: He is an Ivy League-educated Teamster, a socialist who has started and run small businesses that installed solar and wind energy systems and a blue-collar guy who is a serious policy wonk. "His mind is like a file cabinet," says Mitchel Cohen, a longtime Green Party activist who has known Hawkins since they worked together in the anti-nuclear power movement of the 1970s.

Yet beneath the candidate's unconventional biography is a man whose belief in independent left third-party politics hasn't wavered over five decades.

"The richest 1 percent already own the two major parties. It's time working people had one of our own," Hawkins is fond of saying.

When progressives join with Democrats, he explains, "You're also in a coalition with the biggest capitalists on Wall Street and the real estate industry and other corporate influences. You lose your independent voice, even your independent identity as a fundamental alternative. Instead, you end up becoming a liberal."

'WHERE'S MY PARTY?'

Hawkins, 61, was raised in a single-parent household in a multiracial neighborhood in San Mateo, Calif., just south of San Francisco. He still speaks with a twang he acquired from the neighborhood kids he grew up with, whose families had moved from the South during the war to work in the Bay Area shipyards. Captivated by the civil rights protests of the early 1960s, Hawkins caught the third-party bug in 1964 at the age of 12.

At that year's presidential nominating convention, the Democrats had refused on national television to seat the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which was led by poor and working-class blacks in opposition to that state's official all-white Democratic Party. The Republicans, meanwhile, were already going into backlash mode against the early gains of the civil rights movement. The young Hawkins was dismayed.

"I asked 'Where's my party?'" He recalls.

He spent the next 20 years looking for it. His political odyssey included stints working on behalf of the Peace and Freedom Party, which ran Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver for president in 1968; the Citizens Party, which ran the ecologist Barry Commoner in the 1980 presidential election; and the Liberty Union Party in Vermont, where Senator Bernie Sanders got his start in electoral politics. In 1984, Hawkins co-founded the Green Party of the United States and settled into what has become his permanent political home.

"I see the Green Party as the political expression of the New Left of the '60s," Hawkins said.

If that's the case, the Greens have inherited a complicated legacy. The '60s-era social movements triggered a cultural earthquake in terms of how our society thinks about race, gender, sexuality, military conscription, health, nutrition and more. At the same time the Left has struggled over the past four decades to gain even a small foothold in electoral politics. While some radicals, such as Chicago 8 defendant turned California state legislator Tom Hayden, eventually gravitated back to the leftish wing of the Democratic Party, Hawkins has refused to compromise with the two-party system.

For Hawkins, the Left's undoing can be traced back to its decision to align itself with the "progressive capitalists" of the Democratic Party at the height of the New Deal in the



VOTER OUTREACH: Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins campaigns on a Sunday morning outside the Park Slope Farmers' Market.



BAY RIDGE JOURNAL.BLOGSPOT.COM

1930s. Creating a popular front to oppose the far right — originally conceived as a temporary expedient in the run-up to World War II — has hardened over the decades into a permanent, unthinking reflex that, in Hawkins' estimation, has debilitated the Left in the United States.

20 CAMPAIGNS IN 21 YEARS

Hawkins has more than maintained his own political voice — running for public office 20 times in the past 21 years. He has campaigned for everything from Syracuse City Council to U.S. Senate. So far he is 0 for 19. In 2010, he garnered 60,000 votes in the governor's race and won a much-coveted ballot line for the Greens. A year later, he narrowly missed winning a Syracuse City Council seat in 2011, losing by less than 100 votes. And now, there is this year's breakthrough. In addition to the 9 percent statewide support, there are polls showing him running at 10 to 20 percent in some upstate congressional districts and 24 percent in Syracuse.

"Howie's a figure of stature upstate," Gronowicz said. "He's been relentless in putting his boots on the ground and canvassing for votes."

Hawkins' rise this year has been propelled in good part by the hot-button issues of public education and fracking. In both cases, the governor's policies have evoked a visceral response from constituents who fear that vital common goods — public schools on the one hand, clean air and water on the other — are on the verge of being ruined in order to enrich powerful private interests with close ties to the governor.

This frustration wasn't hard to find at the first two house parties I attended with Hawkins.

"Being a public school parent has really politicized me. I've never felt so disenfranchised," said Kemala Karmen, a mother of two children enrolled in Brooklyn public schools who also cited Cuomo's refusal to ban fracking as a reason she supports Hawkins. For Karmen, the governor's refusal to back off on standardized testing of children in early grades was especially infuriating. "He has completely failed on public education," she said.

To Rosalie Friend, a retired educational psychologist, the final straw was Cuomo's full-throated support for Wall



MICHAEL O'NEIL



RYAN DELANEY

RUNNING MATES: Howie Hawkins campaigns with his running mate Brian Jones, an educator, actor and socialist who taught in New York City's public schools for nine years.

Street-backed charter school operator Eva Moskowitz earlier this year, during Moskowitz's confrontation with Mayor Bill de Blasio over his refusal to grant three of her privately run schools access to public school buildings that were already fully utilized. The fight ended with Cuomo strong-arming a measure through the State Legislature that requires public schools to house charter schools free of charge or for the Department of Education to cover the rent for charters that have to find their own buildings, depriving cash-starved public schools of much-needed funding.

"After that, there was no going back," Friend said. "If I had any thought of voting for him, that ended it."

"He [Cuomo] doesn't publish his own schedule. He doesn't interact with his constituents. He's not available to us," added Susan Weltman, a retired social worker who voted for Cuomo in 2010 but is supporting Hawkins this year.

At both house parties, Hawkins urged attendees to donate to his surging campaign,

noting that the average Hawkins donor gives \$70 vs. \$7,000 for the average Cuomo donor.

In his first appearance, he briefly referenced his 1964 political epiphany before drifting further back in time to discuss 1944 and Franklin Roosevelt's proposed Economic Bill of Rights and how his ambitious plans to convert New York to renewable energy would fulfill the promise of FDR's vision with a green twist to address climate change.

As Hawkins continued, the eyes of his supporters in the room started to glaze over, but they stuck with him and heard him out. Chided afterward by Mattera for giving a "history lesson," Hawkins was clear and direct at his second appearance, sharing more of his personal story about how his political convictions took shape under the influence of the civil rights movement and relating that to the present moment and the rationale for his third-party candidacy.

"The whole political spectrum has moved

Continued on page 19



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AFTER THE CLIMATE MARCH, WHAT NEXT? GRASSROOTS ACTIVISTS SEE MANY POSSIBILITIES

The People's Climate March made history on September 21 when 400,000 people paraded through the streets of mid-Manhattan. "It's a glimpse of the movement we need," Naomi Klein said afterwards. A day later, Flood Wall Street protesters converged at the tip of Manhattan and poured onto Broadway to carry out nonviolent direct actions that tied up the financial district for hours.

But now that the largest-ever climate change protest is behind us, what can people do to build a climate justice movement that can bring about far-reaching change over the coming decades? The Independent invited a half-dozen grassroots organizers from New York and elsewhere to share their thoughts.

FIGHT THE FRACKERS

BY KIM FRACZEK

When we marched on September 21, we made it clear that it was time to put a stop to new fossil fuel projects and begin making a rapid transition to renewable energy sources. However, that was only one day. We have to continue organizing against these projects in a sustained way if we are going to change our energy system.

Here in the New York City area, the first thing we need to do is get informed about plans to build a massive liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility called Port Ambrose several miles offshore from Long Beach, N.Y., and just up the coast from the Rockaways. Liberty Natural Gas — a secretive corporation of nameless backers based in the Cayman Islands — claims Port Ambrose would be used to import gas, but it's clear that the intent is to export gas to Europe and Asia at enormous profit. Exporting would allow companies to obtain higher prices for gas, which would lead to more fracking in the Northeast.

Liquefied natural gas is a highly volatile substance, making Port Ambrose an obvious terrorist target. To build such a facility near New York City is reckless. Plus, an offshore wind farm has been proposed for the same area — we know we need to move to renewable energy, and Long Island residents themselves want wind power, but the two projects cannot coexist. So what do we do?

Step one is to call Governor Cuomo at 518-474-8390 and tell him to veto Port Ambrose. Additionally, come to our monthly NYC Grassroots Alliance meetings that focus on fracking issues at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. We have a real shot at defeating this port if we work together. The environmental impact statement on the project is due out around the winter holidays, and we need all hands on deck to send a clear message that we do not want LNG — and then we can work together for offshore wind that's built right. Sign up for the Sane Energy Project newsletter on our website to remain in the loop.

Second, get involved with our Food Not Fracking Alliance. There is compelling evidence that fracking poisons our land and groundwater, harming our ability to grow healthy produce, dairy, wine grapes and other agricultural products. By opposing fracking, we're standing up for New York State's proud tradition of farms and vineyards.

New York's future should be as the land of organic food and wine, not as an industrial wasteland for Wall Street profits. Let's work together to build a shopping list on our Food Not Fracking website of farmers, food distributors and shopkeepers working to keep New York State's farms safe from toxins and promote a sustainable economy based on healthy local food. Sign up for Food Not Fracking's emails, join our Facebook page or check our website for details on an upcoming release event for a book by Dr. Michelle Bamberger on fracking's impact on our family, pets and food.

Third, get the big picture on fracking in New York City and State by visiting our online interactive map of fracking

infrastructure. There are at least 40 fracking infrastructure projects currently in the works in this state. You Are Here showcases existing and proposed fracking projects and links users with the frontline affected communities that are organizing at a local level. When we learn each other's stories, we can build networks effectively, which is how we will make the road to a renewable and sustainable New York. Check out the map, tell your friends and reach out to a local community group in your own backyard.

Kim Fraczek is a coordinator at SANE Energy Project. For more information, see saneenergyproject.org and youarehereNYmap.org. To attend a meeting of the NYC Grassroots Alliance, see meetup.com/NYC-Grassroots-Alliance.

FLOOD EVERYWHERE: LET'S PUT DE BLASIO TO THE TEST

BY SANDY NURSE AND ZAK SOLOMON

Pulling off large-scale, unpermitted direct actions in New York City is difficult. We're in the heart of global capital, and the NYPD doesn't hesitate to act like a private army to defend the rights of the 1%.

Yet by nearly all accounts and metrics, Flood Wall Street on September 22 was an overwhelming success. As many as 3,000 protesters outmaneuvered the surprisingly docile NYPD to overtake the southern tip of Broadway at the iconic Wall Street Bull — creating an eight-hour-long transportation choke point in the Financial District and derailing traffic 14 blocks north to Chambers Street — presumably making financial “business as usual” on that day exceedingly difficult.

The protest held at its core an anti-capitalist critique of the climate crisis and major news outlets from CNN to *Democracy Now!* ran headlines like “Climate Change Protests on Wall Street,” allowing our message to infiltrate the national debate the day before more than 120 world leaders gathered in New York for the U.N. Climate Summit.

The day's actions culminated with about 100 people (and a polar bear) being arrested during a sit-in at Broadway and Wall Street. As the last protester was escorted into a prisoner transport vehicle, Police Commissioner Bill Bratton emerged from a black sedan to stride briskly across the field. At that moment, our victory felt less than complete.

Perhaps the city had ceded this battle to us having determined how much more they had to lose on the battlefield of public relations. Imagine the alternate headlines: “De Blasio Marches for Climate, Then Cracks Heads on Wall Street — 1,000 Arrests.” This was too great a risk for a mayor elected on a platform of “progressive” reform, especially sandwiched between the People's Climate March and the U.N. Summit. Instead the administration took the one-off disruption in stride and claimed credit the following day for prioritizing First Amendment rights over the free flow of traffic.

Regardless of the true intentions of the mayor and his police commissioner, it's time for this city's social justice community to take a fresh look at the landscape. The NYPD's newfound sensitivity to appearances at high-profile events like Flood Wall Street suggest that we should be prepared to take full advantage of these opportunities in the future. From a strategic perspective, this means calling for bolder, more confrontational actions that are escalating at the scale of our global crisis. It means moving from mic-checks and roundabout marches to lockdowns and blockades. To be clear: it's time to put this administration to the test.

At the same time — even more importantly — we must

demand that the same rights and privileges be extended to all NYC residents. We must not allow the NYPD's calculated leniency toward one group of mostly white, middle-class protesters to obscure the fact that low-income black and brown communities face constant violence from the NYPD. De Blasio's first year in office has been marked by the police murder of Eric Garner, among many other instances of police brutality. In fact, two days before Flood Wall Street took place, pregnant woman Sandra Amezcua was violently slammed to the ground by police in Sunset Park. This highlights the disparity that exists in our city and we must remind the mayor that until police brutality ends for everyone, it has ended for no one.

And still, the overarching questions we need to stay focused on remain with us. How will state repression and police violence escalate amid worsening climate change? How does the militarization of local police foreshadow the excessive use of force during future resource scarcities? Is it possible for a broad-based social movement to stave off climate chaos using only nonviolent direct action and the building of sustainable alternatives?

A climate justice movement worthy of its name cannot ignore these issues. In fact, they demand for us to be more daring and more resolved in our struggles.

Sandy Nurse and Zak Solomon were two of the organizers of Flood Wall Street. They are small business owners and community project organizers in Brooklyn, NY.

INDIGENOUS WISDOM OPENS NEW PATHS OF RESISTANCE

BY PENNIE OPAL PLANT

Indigenous communities around the world have been devastated by corrupt fossil fuel corporations for many decades and very few non-indigenous people seemed to notice or care. The genocides, the stereotyping and the lack of respect by the mainstream made these important and powerful voices essentially mute — until now.

The voices of indigenous peoples and other heavily affected communities were at the forefront of the People's Climate March. However, it's going to take much more than 400,000 people hitting the streets on a single day in one city to change the broken economic and political systems that have created the climate crisis.

It's vital that we continue to stay current on climate science research as well as remain aware of the various manifestations of the climate crisis occurring around the world. When we are well informed, people who don't understand how delicately balanced and interconnected our planet's climate systems are are more likely to listen to our concerns.

We can also take action where we are. In 2012, indigenous women leaders sparked the Idle No More movement across Canada when the federal government in that country threatened to abrogate long-standing treaty rights of First Nations people. Idle No More has since gone international and continues to inspire opposition to extreme energy projects.

Here in the San Francisco Bay Area, our Idle No More group working in solidarity with frontline refinery activists organized “Connect the Dots: Refinery Healing Walks” last year. These were a series of walks, one each month for four months, from seven to 14 miles each, from one refinery community to another. Led by Native American elders in prayer, these walks were highly successful in bringing awareness to the dangers of the refineries, the climate crisis the fossil fuel industry is causing and ways for people to get involved in

solving the problems. We have made a commitment to organize the walks for a total of four years, with the last walk in 2017.

Organizing work continues on the ground in the refinery corridor, which has become an important destination for tar sands oil from Canada and fracked Bakken crude from North Dakota, both of which are highly polluting even by the norms of the oil industry. In this milieu, the predominantly people of color city of Richmond has become a focal point. Chevron is seeking a \$1 billion expansion of its refinery there, which is already the largest stationary emitter of greenhouse gases in California. Years of community opposition have forced the world's 12th largest corporation to scale back the size of its proposed project while a progressive city government has pushed ahead with programs that emphasize clean energy systems and green jobs.

Our struggle for climate justice in the Bay Area is just one example of what good people working together can do. We also must be prepared to join together for more large actions to show our commitment, our solidarity and our love for the continuance of life. We must be relentless, resilient, powerfully nonviolent and kind to one another. The beautiful future that we are all weaving together requires the best in us to create the best for those yet to come.

Pennie Opal Plant is a member of Idle No More San Francisco Bay. For more information, see idlenomore.ca and facebook.com/IdleNoMoreBayAreaCalifornia.

DIVEST NOW

BY BLAKE SUGARMAN

ALL around the world, students are telling their universities the same thing: investing in fossil fuels is a bet against our future. Coal, oil and gas companies are wrecking the planet's climate and associating with them is no longer acceptable. Divest our endowment from these destructive companies.

New York University promotes itself as a "sustainability leader." That's why student activists like myself have been pressuring the powers-that-be at NYU to live up to that claim. We want NYU to recognize the contradiction between its sustainability efforts and its environmentally damaging investments.

October 16 was a landmark moment in our campaign. For the first time, we got to present the case for divestment to people with the institutional power to make it a reality. NYU has formed a "divestment subcommittee" within the University Senate to consider our demand and on this day they heard us out.

This is good news for our campaign, but we did not get to this place without a struggle. After almost a year of trudging through NYU's narrow bureaucratic channels with little progress, we learned a valuable lesson: sometimes it takes escalation to be taken seriously.

John Sexton, the president of NYU, ignored our request for a private meeting with him until we took direct action to call him out in public. At Sexton's "town hall" meeting last April, we unraveled giant scrolls with more than 1,500 petition signatures calling on NYU to divest its \$3 billion endowment.

With so many concerned student, faculty and alumni names displayed so boldly, it was impossible for Sexton to ignore us any longer.

The action earned us a private meeting with both Sexton and NYU's chief financial officer Marty Dorph. Sexton agreed to our demands of 1) putting fossil fuel divestment on the University Senate agenda, 2) creating a subcommittee on divestment within the Financial Committee of the University Senate and 3) ensuring that we are able to present our proposal to the Board of Trustees in spring of 2015. These concessions are unprecedented for a student group at NYU.

NYU's 66-member Board of Trustees is filled with 1 percenters from finance, real estate, corporate media and prestigious law firms. If we can get this elite group to publicly disavow the fossil fuel industry it will be big news for the movement. NYU would be by far the largest school to divest yet. It may seem unlikely, but with groups like the Rockefeller Brothers Fund announcing that they will divest from fossil fuels, we are more hopeful than ever.

Momentum is building. The People's Climate March inspired many new climate activists to get involved across the country, and we've seen the effects on campus. Our core membership has doubled in the past few weeks.

Fossil fuel divestment offers climate activists a tangible goal. It's a local approach to a global problem that goes beyond small lifestyle changes. We intend to change the public conversation. It's past time for people to see climate change as a moral and a political issue. That's why we draw inspiration from the anti-apartheid divestment movement of the 1980s. The tactic has proven effective before.

College students are at the forefront of the divestment movement. This is unsurprising. Students have always been on the front lines of social change, but divestment is far more inclusive than that. Anyone who is part of a religious group or a labor union or lives in a city or state with a pension fund (i.e. just about everyone) can push for divestment in their community. To date, 181 institutions, including 13 U.S. universities, as well as more than 600 individuals have divested over \$50 billion in fossil fuel assets. Your organization could be next. To learn more about how you can get involved, see gofossilfree.org.

Blake Sugarman graduated from New York University last spring. He is a climate activist, artist and a member of NYU Divest.

SKIP THE NUCLEAR KOOL-AID, WE WANT RENEWABLES

BY MARK HAIM

ONCE upon a time, nuclear salesmen promised us limitless, clean energy that would be "too cheap to meter." Well, in the ensuing decades, the so-called "peaceful atom" has traveled a long, circuitous route, experiencing along the way technology failures, phenomenally expensive accidents, unresolved waste problems and — the industry's true Achilles' Heel — massive cost overruns that led to the cancellation of the majority of planned reactors, forcing utilities to write off countless tens of billions. The collapse of the industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s was cited in *Forbes Magazine* in 1985 as "the largest managerial disaster in business history, a disaster on a monumental scale."

The industry has never recovered, and, despite bullish projections of a nuclear renaissance made a decade ago, only a tiny handful of new reactors are under construction today. These are highly subsidized by both ratepayers and taxpayers, as Wall Street won't even consider investments as risky as new nukes without federal loan guarantees. They're also behind schedule and over budget.

But hope dies hard in the hearts, and on the balance sheets, of those companies pushing for a nuclear revival. And, in a time of growing concern over climate change, their public relations machine has been working overtime to brand nuclear as a green alternative to CO₂-belching coal and gas. In the real world, however, nuclear is just too slow and expensive to effectively address the climate crisis, which requires dramatic

Continued on page 19

BETH WHITNEY

CLIMATE MARCH INSIDER LOOKS BACK

By JOHN TARLETON

The People's Climate March was a sprawling enterprise with more than 1,000 endorsing organizations, dozens of working groups, three de facto steering committees and hundreds of staff and volunteers. At the center of this activity was PCM's Logistics Coordinator Leslie Cagan, a familiar face on the Left who has orchestrated many of this country's largest political demonstrations over the past three decades.

I caught up with Cagan a month after the march and asked the veteran organizer to reflect on what had happened, as well as to address lingering questions such as why this historic event had no official speakers and what was up with those subway ads proclaiming that climate change had united bankers and hipsters (and presumably everyone else).

JOHN TARLETON: An enormous number of people turned out for the People's Climate March. But besides creating impressive images of crowds of people in the streets, what did this protest achieve?

LESLIE CAGAN: We're not going to know for another six months to a year whether this in fact marks a new moment in the climate justice movement. That said, there are moments in the course of any movement when being able to publicly show that you represent massive numbers of people is an important step forward. We did that. It's not a beginning or an end but a part of a process.

"THE SIZE OF A MARCH DOESN'T ITSELF MAKE POLICY CHANGES. IT HAS TO BE A PART OF A MOVEMENT THAT IS CONSTANTLY BUILDING AND DEEPENING AND STRENGTHENING ITSELF."

There were tremendous numbers of young people — not just college age but high school kids too and younger even. That's always a good sign for any movement. Also, there was much more racial and ethnic diversity than one usually sees related to the climate crisis or environmental issues. That wasn't an accident. There was a conscious effort to recalibrate the character of this movement. The real question is how do we maintain that in a way that's not just a numbers game but ensures that people of color and working people are in the leadership of this movement and setting the direction from here on out.

What was the initial reaction when you reached out to labor and community leaders who would not usually be seen at a climate change protest?

At an organizational level some groups signed

on right away. Others said, "Well we need to talk about it. This is a new issue for us." Many groups had never done anything on environmental justice or the climate crisis, but the memory of Hurricane Sandy was still fresh in many people's memories as an example of the impact climate change can have. A lot of people became invested in this and pushed and struggled within their organizations and won the day in terms of getting at least an endorsement for the march.

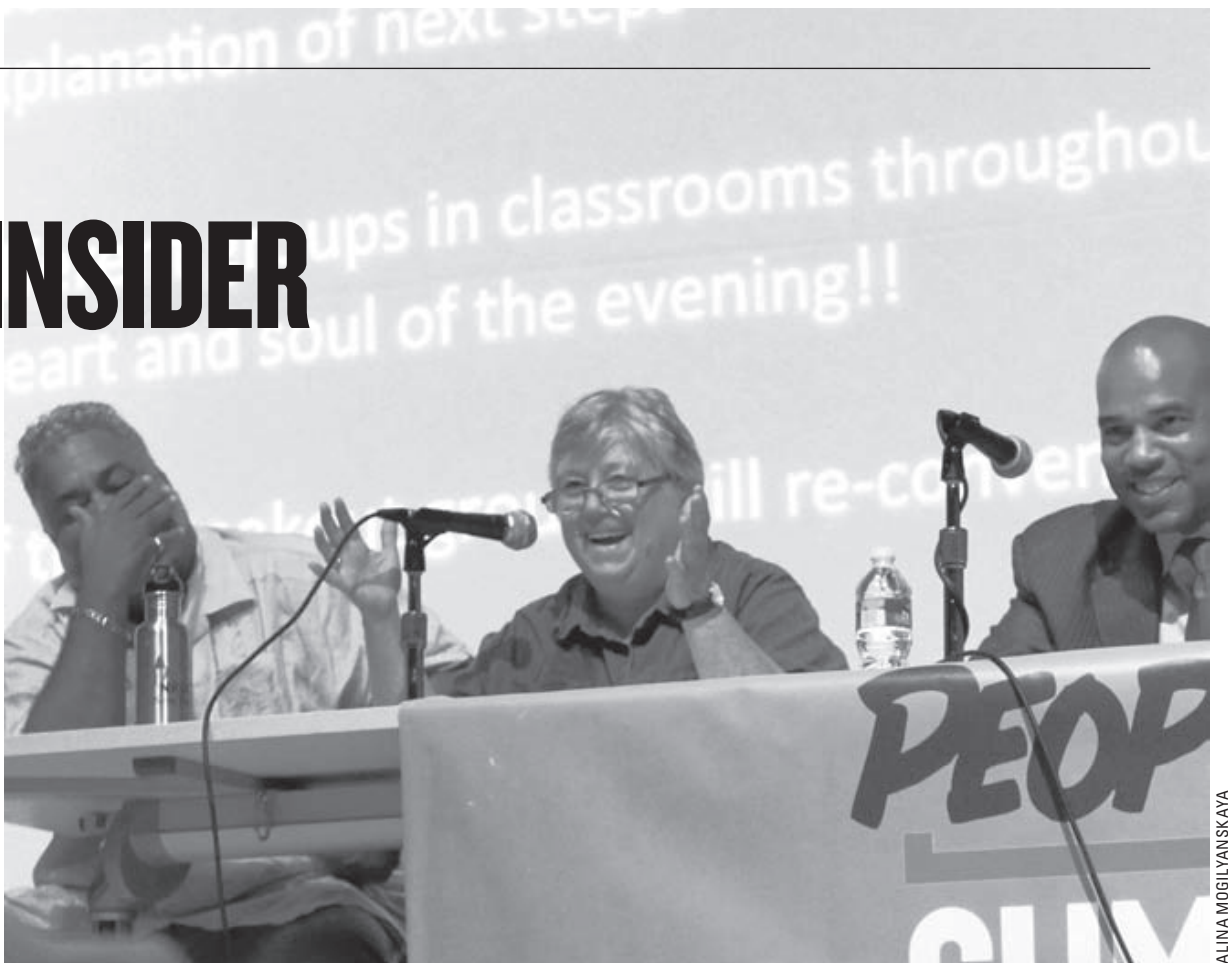
Why did the march end up on 11th Avenue on the far west side of Manhattan instead of at the United Nations?

We didn't want to go to the U.N. There's not much happening on that part of First Avenue on a Sunday afternoon. There was also some sentiment that we shouldn't lead people to believe that the U.N. was going to solve the problem.

We originally wanted to march from Columbus Circle through Times Square to Union Square. Times Square remained a contentious issue for weeks. Before a final decision was made by the NYPD, we organized a targeted

campaign to put pressure on the mayor's office to put pressure on the police department to give us Times Square.

Several unions and other organizations with close ties to de Blasio made calls to people in City Hall very close to the mayor. We know that these mayoral aides in turn made calls to One Police Plaza. That did not lead to a decision to give us Times Square. But I do think that's part of what made the rest of the negotiations a lot easier in terms of arranging the gazillion details that are a part of staging an event of this size. The police insisted on 11th Avenue so people could get to their buses to leave town more easily and also because they wanted us out of the center of Manhattan. We conceded that point, because the most important thing for us all along was marching in the heart of the city. And for most of the day, most of the people did that.



COALITION FORCES: Leslie Cagan (center) has been a lead organizer for many of this country's largest protests over the past three decades.

Why was there no roster of speakers at the People's Climate March?

One of the biggest factors was that this was a broad coalition with a wide range of perspectives, some at odds with one another. For instance, some unions do not oppose fracking or building the Keystone XL pipeline. They believe it's an important job opportunity.

A decision was made to try and congregate all our forces into the march and to not aggravate our differences. One way to do that was to not have a rally. If there had been a rally, I could have imagined that someone would have said, "We need to have someone speaking against fracking." It's a struggle going on in many parts of the country. Here in New York, there's a very big fight. And certainly some of the trade unions would have said, "No, we're not going to be on the same stage with somebody who's speaking against fracking." There were also practical issues: where to do a rally, the potentially very high cost, etc.

So why not just part ways with unions that support fracking and the Keystone XL pipeline, both of which are devastating to the climate?

The question is what do you want your relationship to be to unions who support projects they see as good for jobs even if they're bad for the environment? Do you want to close the door? Or, do you want to open the door and hopefully, sooner rather than later, win them over to a position that actually is more grounded in the environmental justice focus that we have?

Another messaging question: What was up with the subway ads like the one for the march about hipsters and bankers being in the same boat? I couldn't look at it without cringing.

I couldn't believe it when I saw it. It caused me to cringe too. This was an example of the way that our organizing was set up. Groups could

do their own thing. So one particular organization, in this case it was Avaaz.org, raised a lot of money online and bought the subway ads. They decided what the content would be. They did not say to the larger coalition, "We're going to going to make a contribution to this overall effort by purchasing subway ads and what do you all think they should say?" Instead, they basically said, "We're going to buy some subway ads and you'll see them when you ride the subway."

A lot of us, myself included, were not only surprised but put off by those ads. If bankers and hipsters is what people think we want the range of diversity to be in this movement ... well, that doesn't capture it for me.

What made the People's Climate March both unique and similar to other mass protests that you have played a leading role in organizing?

What makes each mass protest unique has to do with their moment in history. Things like this come together when there is already some organizing going on and resources — people power mostly — are put to work in a very good way. But also it's the right time and the right place and the right articulation of the issue that resonates with people. This was the right time because more people are becoming aware of the climate crisis and the urgent need for action. We can't put it off for another 15, 20, 30 years. We also can't assume that the powers-that-be are going to act on their own without being pushed by people.

One thing that runs through all of these big demonstrations is the realization on the day after that no matter the size of a march, it doesn't by itself make policy changes. It has to be part of a movement that is constantly building and deepening and strengthening itself both in terms of its numbers, its diversity, the types of communities that are involved and in terms of its creativity and the tactics that it uses. You know you have a movement when you can't keep track of everything that's going on.

I think we'll be able to look back and say the People's Climate March inspired new people to join the movement and re-energized people already in it. And if all it did was to take this movement to another level of organizing and building its own power, then it was more than worthwhile to do.

MTA BIG BROTHER?

BY REBECA IBARRA

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority will place New York City subway riders under increasing surveillance in the coming decade.

Police Commissioner Bill Bratton has championed the idea of installing cameras inside subway cars for months, saying he would like the New York Police Department to someday be able to monitor all 6,325 subway cars in real time. On Oct 1, Public Advocate Letitia James released a letter from the MTA in which it committed to installing cameras on 904 R211-class subway cars that it expects to order as part of its 2015-2019 capital plan. The agency had previously ordered 300 other trains that will be capable of having cameras installed inside of them.

The cameras are likely to cost millions of dollars to install and will not be able to provide police real-time images, at least for the foreseeable future. Surveillance supporters hope the cameras will reduce crime in the subway system, including sex crimes against women, which, according to a statement from the Public Advocate's office, occurs mostly on trains. However, critics worry that expanded surveillance inside subway cars will be used to target minor "quality of life" offenders such as the homeless and subway performers.

The MTA has previously sought to install closed-circuit television cameras to monitor its stations, tunnels and platforms. In 2005, the MTA signed a \$205 million contract with Lockheed Martin for a "state-of-the-art electronic security program" that would operate throughout the system. However, the contract was terminated in 2009 and the MTA and Lockheed Martin remain entangled in a costly legal battle over who is to blame for that fiasco.

When asked if the plan to have trains outfitted with cameras risked going the way of the Lockheed Martin contract, MTA spokesman Kevin Ortiz told *The Independent* the project had "completely different infrastructure and scope," though he did not elaborate further.

Ortiz did not comment on whether the cameras in R211 subway cars will someday be integrated into a security network that can be monitored in real time, or on the expected cost of installing such a complex system. "One step at a time," he said. "We are focused on getting a system in place for the R211s."

The MTA, the largest public transportation agency in the nation, would follow in the footsteps of the Chicago Transit Authority. In 2011, the CTA embarked on an ambitious plan of installing more than 1,800 cameras in five months, spokeswoman Catherine Hosinski told *The Independent*. They outfitted 834 subway cars with multiple cameras, some of which have live feeds viewed from a control center in the city's Office of Emergency Management.

The CTA released a report this June saying violent crimes on buses, trains and station platforms had declined "more than 34 percent compared with the first half of 2013." Robberies, vandalism and thefts, the most common crimes on the CTA

according to Hosinski, had also dropped by double digits compared to last year.

"The cameras have been a factor," Hosinski said. "They have helped identify patterns and pick up on incidents that go unreported [and] have become an invaluable tool for police and investigations."

Although the CTA operates the nation's second largest public transportation system, it is still much smaller than the MTA's New York City Transit arm, with 1,356 rail cars compared to New York City's 6,325; and an annual ridership of 229.12 million, compared to New York City's 1.708 billion.

City Councilmember Jimmy Vacca (D-Bronx), who has long advocated increased surveillance in trains, told *The Independent* that cameras would be "an important tool to fight crime." He said "cameras are proactive and are also a deterrent."

LIMITED VALUE

Alex Vitale, a Brooklyn College professor of sociology and author of *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*, disputes this, saying, "Real-time observation of thousands of subway cars is never going to be feasible."

The cameras might be helpful in "catching someone later," Vitale said. "But there's no real evidence of cameras having a deterrent effect, like most would like you to believe."

A 2006 report by the New York Civil Liberties Union also concluded that cameras can help in police investigations, but play no significant role in stopping crime. According to the report, "cameras cannot prevent bad things from happening — and the money spent on them may, in fact, divert resources from more effective crime prevention strategies and tactics."

There are already 4,000 cameras placed throughout the system, Jim Gannon, director of communications for Transit Workers Union Local 100, told *The Independent*. Most of them go unmonitored. "They're only used if something happens," he said.

Gannon said the expense seemed unnecessary "if there isn't going to be the capability of real-time" monitoring. However, he said, "There's no reason for us to oppose that as long as whatever is being compiled doesn't go to some digital black hole."

Vitale also expressed concern about how the MTA and the NYPD would handle the footage. "One of my main concerns about the use of this kind of widespread videotaping is what happens with the data," Vitale said. "This data should not be used for just creating intelligence files on people when there's no evidence of a crime being committed."

'BROKEN WINDOWS' GOES UNDERGROUND

The subway system's rate of serious felonies has decreased by 85 percent from 1990 to 2013, according to a *Daily News* op-ed penned this summer by NYPD Transit Chief Joseph Fox. Nonetheless, there has been an increased crackdown on low-level subway offenses this year. "Each illegal panhandler, ped-

dlar, or fare evader that is left unchecked can have a negative impact on the sense of safety and security of subway riders," Fox wrote. "That doesn't sit well with us."

Increased surveillance could result in increased targeting of minor offenses. Like Ray Kelly before him, Bratton is "exploring and increasing the use of technology," Vitale said. "He is also doubling down on 'quality-of-life' and 'broken windows' policing. That's very troubling."

According to Vitale, Bratton has managed to convince people that the NYPD's "broken windows" policy of targeting minor offenses helps prevent more serious crimes from taking place.

"It defies logic," Vitale said, "to believe that getting rid of all the panhandlers could bring down crime."

Nearly 2,000 homeless people inhabit the subway system. They are more likely, Vitale added, to encounter a police officer than a social worker and bear the brunt of "quality-of-life" policing.

"The [homeless] population is figuratively and literally going underground," said Dave Subren, a member of the advocacy group Picture the Homeless (PTH). He said this has alarmed the city's increasingly gentrified population. "Increased surveillance is only there to appease the public," Subren concluded.

BUSTING THE BUSKERS

Subway performers have also been targeted by "broken windows" policing.

Michael Christian moved to New York from Vermont in 2011 and was excited to play his violin underground, only to be arrested by an undercover police officer his second time performing at the Spring Street station on the C line.

Christian, a member of the arts advocacy group BuskNY, said there has been a rise in the ticketing and arresting of artists despite the fact that performing in the subway has been legal since 1985. The violinist was surprised when, instead of noticing a decline in unlawful arrests with the new administration, "as soon as January rolled around we started hearing of more people being confronted by police."

More officers are being sent into the subway to combat "low level violations" while being unfamiliar with MTA rules and regulations, Christian said. "The costs of implementing these rules, the expenditure that's necessary to arrest someone dancing on the train, to hold him for two nights and to process all the court work, is a huge amount of [taxpayers'] money for quite a meaningless goal."

As far as cameras go, Christian told *The Independent* that while the NYPD's stated policy objective is not to arrest more musicians, the performing community remains skeptical of police intentions. The irony of the crackdown is not lost on him.

"Subway performance is one of the most appreciated elements of the transit experience," Christian said. "In fighting quality-of-life offenses [they] have succeeded in decreasing the quality of life."

STILL SEEKING JUSTICE

THOUSANDS TURN OUT FOR FERGUSON OCTOBER

PHOTOS BY ELLEN DAVIDSON

TEXT BY ALINA MOGILYANSKAYA

“Hands up, don’t shoot!”

“Black lives matter!”

These have become the clarion calls of the struggle for justice for Michael Brown. After the unarmed black teenager was shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9 and his body was left on the street for more than four hours, protests erupted. Those initial expressions of grief and rage have since grown into an organized national movement.

Daily protests have taken place in Ferguson since Brown’s death, punctuated by violent police crack-downs and the subsequent police killings in the Greater St. Louis Area of two other young black men, Vonderrit Myers, 18, and Kajiembe Powell, 25.

During the weekend of October 10-13, thousands of St. Louis residents and out-of-towners took part in acts of resistance dubbed “Ferguson October.” Demonstrators demanded the indictment of Brown’s killer, Darren Wilson, and responded to systemic issues underlying the murder — racial bias and lack of accountability in law enforcement, normalized violence against communities of color, the militarization of the nation’s police departments and more — with rallies, direct actions and civil disobedience. Dozens were arrested.

Tensions remain high in Ferguson. The grand jury deadline for a decision about Wilson’s indictment is January 7, and as suspicions about the legitimacy of the process swirl through the community, people return day after day to protest at the local police station. In the recent words of one Ferguson resident, “No one is going to rest until we get justice.”

Thousands participated in a “Justice for All” march in St. Louis on October 11. The march wound through downtown St. Louis and concluded with a rally at Kiener Plaza. The crowd numbered as many as 3,000 people and included local and out-of-state activists, people of faith, youth, labor union members and more.

St. Louis hip-hop artist Kareem Jackson, known as Tef Poe, speaks at the rally that followed the march while Ashley Yates, of Millennial Activists United, raises her arm in a Black Power salute to the crowd. Both have emerged as young leaders in the struggle for racial justice in the wake of Michael Brown’s death.

Messages at the march aired a multitude of grievances.

A young woman decries being seen as a target because of her brown skin.

In what has become a defining gesture of the Ferguson protests, participants in the march raise up both arms.

On Saturday, October 11, activists marched from the Michael Brown memorial by Canfield Green Apartments, where he was shot, to the Ferguson police station. Young and working-class black people emerged as leaders on the ground in Ferguson after Brown’s death, coordinating much of the local response and challenging established civil rights figures and institutions in the process.

In a twist on the now-popular Ferguson protest chant, “They think it’s a game, they think it’s a joke,” marchers block an intersection in the Shaw neighborhood by playing jump rope and hopscotch.

Protesters march from the store on Shaw Avenue where Vonderrit Myers was killed to the center of the Shaw neighborhood in St. Louis.

On October 12, protesters gathered near the convenience store where 18-year-old Vonderrit Myers Jr. was killed by an off-duty police officer on October 8. Here, Vonderrit Myers Sr. holds a photograph of his son and the teen’s mother. After the rally, protesters marched through the streets and ended the night with a sit-in at least 1,000 strong at St. Louis University. Seventeen others were arrested that night after doing a sit-in at another convenience store.



Protesters drew an outline of a body in white and yellow chalk in the Ferguson police station parking lot to memorialize Michael Brown.

Members of the clergy knelt in front of police in riot gear at the Ferguson police station, praying and asking the police to repent in the pouring rain. Some participants got through the line of police and more than 40 were arrested.

October 13 was dubbed by Ferguson October organizers as a “Moral Monday” of civil disobedience, alluding to ongoing “Moral Monday” actions that began in North Carolina last year and have since spread to other states. Clergy leaders and others, including philosopher Cornel West, led a march to the Ferguson police station on the morning of October 13.

MEXICO MURDER MYSTERY

43 STUDENTS DISAPPEARED AFTER RUN-IN WITH CORRUPT POLICE FORCE

BY HÉCTOR AGREDANO RIVERA

Tens of thousands of people marched throughout Mexico in early October to demand justice for 43 missing students from the Normal Rural School at Ayotzinapa. The student teachers were last seen being herded onto buses after police killed six of them in two shooting incidents.

The marches came amid the discovery of several shallow mass graves near the location where the student teachers were last seen. The graves contain dozens of burned and maimed bodies — Mexican authorities say months of DNA testing may be necessary to determine their identities.

But the discovery has led to shock and horror across all of Mexico, fixing the nation's attention on the plight of the missing students now feared murdered in the most brazen act of political violence in more than a generation.

In Mexico City, parents and students from the teachers' college in Ayotzinapa led an October 9 mass demonstration, protesters carrying signs and banners with the names of the missing students and crosses with the names of those killed in the police shooting, which also left 25 injured. Many are using the slogan "*Hasta encontrarlos*" ("Until we find them") in their organizing efforts and as an expression of hope that some of the students may still be alive.

Parents of the victims and other students suspect that police turned the 43 missing students over to the local criminal organization Guerreros Unidos. Recent investigations indicate that Guerreros Unidos has ties to local politicians, including the mayor of Iguala, who has been in hiding since the shootings took place.

An international outcry has forced the federal government to send in the army and federal police to look for the missing students. More than 20 police, as well as some Guerreros Unidos members, have already been taken into custody, but have yet to face criminal charges over the murders and kidnappings.

While authorities work to identify the bodies and locate the Iguala mayor, protests, mobilizations and blockades continue across the country. The left wing of the national teachers' union and the rural teachers' colleges have called for an indefinite strike until the missing students are found.

The Raúl Isidro Burgos Normal Rural School at Ayotzinapa is near Chilpancingo, the capital of the state of Guerrero. The school is a teachers' college established in 1926 as part of a national program to train teachers and extend public education to rural communities throughout Mexico. During the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930s, a socialist curriculum was adopted throughout the school system.

Although the curriculum was slowly phased out at other schools, Ayotzinapa is one of the few schools that preserved it. The school is well known for this left-wing legacy, and some of Mexico's best-known radical leaders and guerrilla fighters, including Lucio Cabañas Barrientos and Genaro Vázquez Rojas, studied there. Thus, the government often refers to the school as a "breeding ground for guerrillas."

The school has a strong tradition of resistance and a militant student union. The Federation of Socialist Rural Students of Mexico (FECSM) organizes the curriculum and runs the school together with teachers. Chronic underfunding, however, has threatened the Rural Normal School of Ayotzinapa. For years, the FECSM has fought for more funding and opposed efforts to reform the school and its curriculum, often blockading highways and clashing with police.

Graduates from Ayotzinapa have also been the backbone of the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE) — the left-wing section of the national teachers union — in Guerrero state, where opposition to the neoliberal education reform agenda of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has been strongest.

ers to harassment by police, given their history of resistance, but the attack they suffered on Friday, September 26, is unprecedented. Police violence on this scale hasn't been seen in Mexico since the massacre of Tlatelolco, when army forces killed and disappeared university students on the eve of the 1968 Olympics.

It is difficult to establish exactly what took place on the night of the 26th. Testimonies from survivors have only recently begun to surface via social media, radio interviews, YouTube channels and online news websites. However, the general picture that has emerged is deeply disturbing.

During the day, student teachers converged on the city of Iguala to raise funds to attend an upcoming student congress. They canvassed the city, stood on street corners and went from house to house, collecting donations in cans. The activists also made their way to Iguala's central plaza, where the mayor's wife was holding a political event, but local police barred the students from entering, so the students retreated to the bus station.

Once at the bus station, the student teachers seized three buses from a local bus company and convinced the drivers to cooperate with them. As the students left the bus station, several police vehicles followed them, and once they reached the outskirts of the city, the police blocked the road and surrounded them. Then a small group from the bus at the front of the caravan got off to negotiate with police to let them through.

Chaos ensued. Without warning, police opened fire on the caravan of buses, shooting at the students who had gotten off to negotiate and directly at the bus windows. The student teachers scattered to seek cover from the gunfire.

When the shooting stopped, the activists began exiting the buses with their hands in the air, telling police that they were students, and that some of their classmates had been injured and were bleeding badly. Police opened fire again.

Again, students sought cover — on the ground, between and under the buses. Once the shooting stopped for a second time, 17 students had been injured, three critically. Police then corralled 43 of the students into police trucks and took them from the scene. The students left behind called an ambulance for the injured, and one police truck even escorted the ambulance to the hospital.

• ❖ •

As soon as the police left, people from the neighborhood began helping the students, treating wounds and offering support. Local teachers began calling newspapers, and the student teachers reached out to their classmates to join them for a press conference.

Meanwhile, in another part of Iguala, police confused a bus belonging to a local third-division soccer team, the Avispones of Chilpancingo, with the buses of the student teachers and attacked it, killing three people — one soccer player, the bus driver and a woman who was passing by.

It was midnight by the time the press conference began. Several media outlets were present, and there was a strong turnout from teachers and townspeople. A large group of students from Ayotzinapa had also made their way to Iguala — two hours away — to join their classmates.

But the worst was yet to come. While the press conference was under way, an unmarked pickup truck and a police vehicle showed up and immediately opened fire on the crowd gathered at the scene. Two students died instantly, and as the crowd scattered, the gunmen directed their fire straight at the students attempting to escape.

After this second shooting, the survivors recounted a har-



CRIME SCENE: The search for 43 missing students has led to the discovery of other mass graves like this one near the city of Iguala, where the students were last seen alive.



CORRUPT: Mayor José Luis Abarca Velázquez of Iguala is accused of orchestrating the disappearance of the students.

rowing scene. In his testimony, Omar García, a survivor of the second shooting, said he and his classmates ran toward the city as soon as the unmarked vehicle opened fire. Soldiers from a military convoy stopped them a few blocks away, and when the students asked for help, the soldiers told them: "Shut up, shut up. You were looking for trouble. You wanted to confront them. Well, face them. Face them and handle it."

Marcos explained how he and a few classmates carried a student named Edgar, who was badly injured from a bullet that entered his cheek and shattered his teeth, into the city. Taxi drivers refused to give them a ride, and when they finally found a hospital, health care workers were afraid to help them because they feared for their own lives.

After helping to ease the bleeding and stabilizing Edgar, the nurses left the hospital. Marco and his classmates remained there until 2am, when a group of soldiers burst in with their guns drawn. These soldiers also refused to help them and left. At about 3am, they forced a taxi driver to take Edgar to another hospital. Marco and the rest of his group then sought refuge in a vacant lot, waiting for dawn while rain soaked them.

When morning broke, the students began to regroup at the local police precinct to demand the release of the 43 classmates taken in the police trucks the night before. Police, however, told them that nobody was being held in custody and no arrests had been made the night before. Looking for answers, students returned to the scene of the shooting. There, they found the body of Julio César Mondragón, one of the students taken by police the night before. His face had been flayed, and his eyes had been removed from his eye sockets.

• ❖ •

The shootings in Iguala and the case of the disappeared students from Ayotzinapa have shaken all of Mexico. Pressure



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NOT FORGOTTEN: Demonstrators in the center of Mexico City carry photos of the 43 missing students.

from parents and classmates of the missing students have led to a political crisis in the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

Historically, the PRD was an opposition party to the PRI, now back in power under President Enrique Peña Nieto. But the PRD has degenerated considerably over the last two decades. For example, Guerrero governor Ángel Aguirre Ribero belongs to the PRD, and his administration has been tainted by a series of political scandals linked to corruption and organized crime.

Iguala Mayor José Luis Abarca Velázquez also belongs to the PRD and has been in hiding since the shootings took place. The left wing of the PRD in Guerrero had pressed charges against him in 2013 for his associations with the Beltrán Leyva drug cartel, but the general prosecutor's office never followed up on the accusations. New investigations now link him to the criminal organization Guerreros Unidos.

Despite recent events in Iguala, the national director of the PRD has yet to call on Aguirre Ribero to step down from his post. Instead, Aguirre Ribero has vehemently denied any

responsibility for the events in Iguala and has called for a statewide referendum on whether he should step down.

Meanwhile, President Enrique Peña Nieto's response to the crisis in Iguala has been less than inspiring. On October 9, while thousands of people marched in the streets of Mexico City to demand justice for Ayotzinapa students, Peña Nieto was in Monterrey inaugurating a sports complex and taking selfies with the crowd.

The PRI undoubtedly hopes to take advantage of the political crisis shaking the PRD in the wake of the Iguala shootings. But the 43 missing student teachers and the nine mass graves discovered so far also reflect poorly on the president and his party, since they have tried to push the issue of violence and security to the margins while courting foreign investment with new neoliberal reforms.

Furthermore, the PRI finds itself in a political bind after student strikers at the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) in Mexico City rejected a government "non-offer" to resolve

Continued on page 19




AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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FRANCE VS. HAUTE FINANCE

BY ANNA POLONYI

During his presidential campaign, French President François Hollande declared: “My enemy is finance.” He received a standing ovation from a population that felt that traders on Wall Street were to blame for the country’s stagnant economy.

Three years later, Hollande’s government has come a long way. In August, hoping to woo a gathering of CEOs, his prime minister, Manuel Valls, professed: “I love business!” The declaration came days after he had reshuffled his cabinet for the second time in less than six months, firing Economy Minister Arnaud Montebourg, an outspoken critic of austerity measures. Montebourg was replaced by a conservative banker, Emmanuel Macron.

Unlike other European countries such as Greece and Spain, France at first steered clear of slashing public spending to reduce debt. One of Hollande’s flagship reforms was to raise taxes on the wealthy — a measure he hoped would patch up some of the holes in France’s budget when he introduced it in 2012.

The move earned him undying ill-will

2000 and reaching over 90 percent of GDP today. With Germany and the rest of Europe at their heels, the Socialists now find themselves in a mess of their own making.

‘IT’S MODERNITY’

Just as President Barack Obama has tried to strike a so-called “Grand Bargain” on budgetary issues with Republicans — the debt held by the United States, for its part, is more than 100 percent of GDP — Hollande has made similar concessions to the financial right.

“It’s not austerity,” Hollande recently said at a meeting at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “it’s modernity.” France’s 2015 budget, unveiled in September, paints a different picture. It slashes public spending by \$27 billion, cutting down family and employment benefits. The government plans to save \$63 billion over the next three years, and most of it will come out of the state’s welfare program. Though the European Commission may find that it’s not enough, for many in France, it goes too far.

One of the five major unions in France called for a general protest against the budget

I SURRENDER: French President François Hollande has been under heavy pressure from German Chancellor Angela Merkel to introduce austerity measures.

ogists are divided among themselves, and the radical left, the new “*Front de Gauche*,” is unclear in its program at best.

Meanwhile, the Socialist Party is ravaged by internal dissent. In September, the party’s left-wing faction was muzzled in favor of a new cabinet of Hollande loyalists, called in to implement structural reforms without kicking up a fuss.

The rift between reformists and revolutionaries has always existed within the Socialist Party. Though it claimed to be Marxist up until the 1970s, it has since drifted toward the right. “If you look at the Socialist Party’s latest statement of principles, you will see that social liberalism is never quite named, but it is there. The text is far from revolutionary,” says Castagnez.

RESISTANCE

With a legacy of revolt — ranging from the 1789 and 1848 Revolutions to the Paris Commune in 1871, and more recent landmarks like the 1968 student movement — France was long seen by the world as the spiritual home for street protests. Though you can still stumble across a protest on any given Sunday in Paris, they are a pale shadow of what used to be.

In 1995, the government attempted to roll back retirement benefits, sparking a strike that paralyzed the country. The government dropped the plan. In 2006, it tried to pass a labor bill that made anyone under 26 easier to hire — and fire. France’s students and high schoolers flooded the streets. The government dropped the plan.

Since then there has been a smorgasbord of protests in France, but none have been successful in achieving serious political results. During Hollande’s tenure, the largest protests have been reactionary: the conservative antigay movement, *Manif Pour Tous*, or “Protest for All,” came into bloom in opposition to his same-sex marriage bill in 2012. Despite



POLITICS OF RESENTMENT: Hundreds of thousands of people protested without success against France’s same-sex marriage bill in 2013. Their disenchantment has fed the strength of the far-right National Front.

participants’ best efforts, the bill was passed.

Faith in the power of mass popular protest may now be passé, and the failure of *Manif*, according to sociologist Anne Salmon, is key to understanding why. “The real issue here isn’t whether people are out protesting or not. Because many people are very ready to go down to the street. The real question is how their actions would translate into a real political alternative,” Salmon says.

THE FAR RIGHT

Marching in the streets by the hundred thousand only to be ignored by the country’s leadership is frustrating — and fodder for the National Front. The anti-immigrant party headed by Marine Le Pen, former presidential candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen’s daughter, has chalked up unprecedented success. In local elections this spring, voters snubbed the Socialist Party and its main opposition party, former president Nicolas Sarkozy’s UMP. The National Front surpassed everyone’s expectations by winning a dozen cities.

“The radical right is at the gates of power,” Prime Minister Manuel Valls said recently in reaction to September polls that indicated Marine Le Pen might be a popular candidate for presidential elections in 2017. According to Salmon, the National Front’s success has a lot to do with France’s feelings of impotence. “When you go out onto the streets and shout and nothing happens, that’s humiliating. So when you see the National Front winning, it’s impressive. At some point, the feeling of success is important,” says Salmon.

THE SOCIALISTS EMBRACE DEMANDS FOR DEEP BUDGET CUTS. WILL THE FRENCH REVOLT ONCE MORE?

from France’s ultra-rich, but it wasn’t enough to beef up the budget on its own. And while unemployment in France is on the rise and an increasing number of people are living below the national poverty line, pressure from Berlin and Brussels to meet EU debt and deficit reduction standards has been relentless.

In the 1990s, Germany came on board with the eurozone project — which was championed by François Mitterrand, the only other Socialist president in French history — on the condition that members’ national debt be capped at 60 percent of GDP. France has been one of the EU’s white elephants ever since, with its debt climbing over the EU norm since

in mid-October. Tens of thousands marched in the streets, but their numbers did not come anywhere near those of previous mass movements. The four other unions ignored the march.

“There is a certain degree of embarrassment on the left, and they have never been this splintered,” says Noëline Castagnez, a historian of the Socialist Party. The left-wing political landscape looks about as grim as a winter day in Normandy: Some of the unions are cozy with the Socialists, student mobilization is weak after its failure to stop university reforms in 2009, the French Communist Party has hit a historical low point, the Ecol-



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ON THE RISE: Marine Le Pen, leader of the anti-immigrant National Front, could be the big political winner in France.

Fanning resentment toward Brussels and Berlin, the National Front taps into French feelings of dashed “national dignity.” It is particularly popular with young French people: according to poll data, a third of voters under 35 cast their ballots for the National Front this spring.

MORE DEMANDS

For decades, France has faced mounting pressure to get on board with the neoliberal program. The French have thus far managed to sustain a generous welfare state, but the writing on the wall in the rest of Europe suggests it may not last long. A recent OECD report, released in October and publicly hailed by Hollande as he sat with the leaders of the world’s financial institutions, says France’s prospects are good — as long as it jettisons more of its labor regulations and social spending.

Hollande is the most unpopular president on record, with only 13 percent of French people claiming to have a favorable view of the Socialist leader in late September. This is because he can afford to be. The French, looking at the rest of Europe, are met with similar and discouraging prospects abroad:



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PROTEST: French trade unionists rally in Paris against Hollande’s right turn on Oct. 16.

Spain’s unemployment, Greece’s mounting extremist right, Portugal’s buoyant debt.

“You know how to boil a frog?” This is how a veteran French journalist responded when asked whether any mobilization against austerity in France could be expected. “You put the frog in cold water. It won’t try to jump out, because as the water gets warmer slowly, it won’t notice. Until the water boils that is, and then it’s too late.” Across the political spectrum, most would agree that the water temperature has been inching from lukewarm to hot. The French frog has always been highly self-conscious. It’s possible it might notice after all and jump.

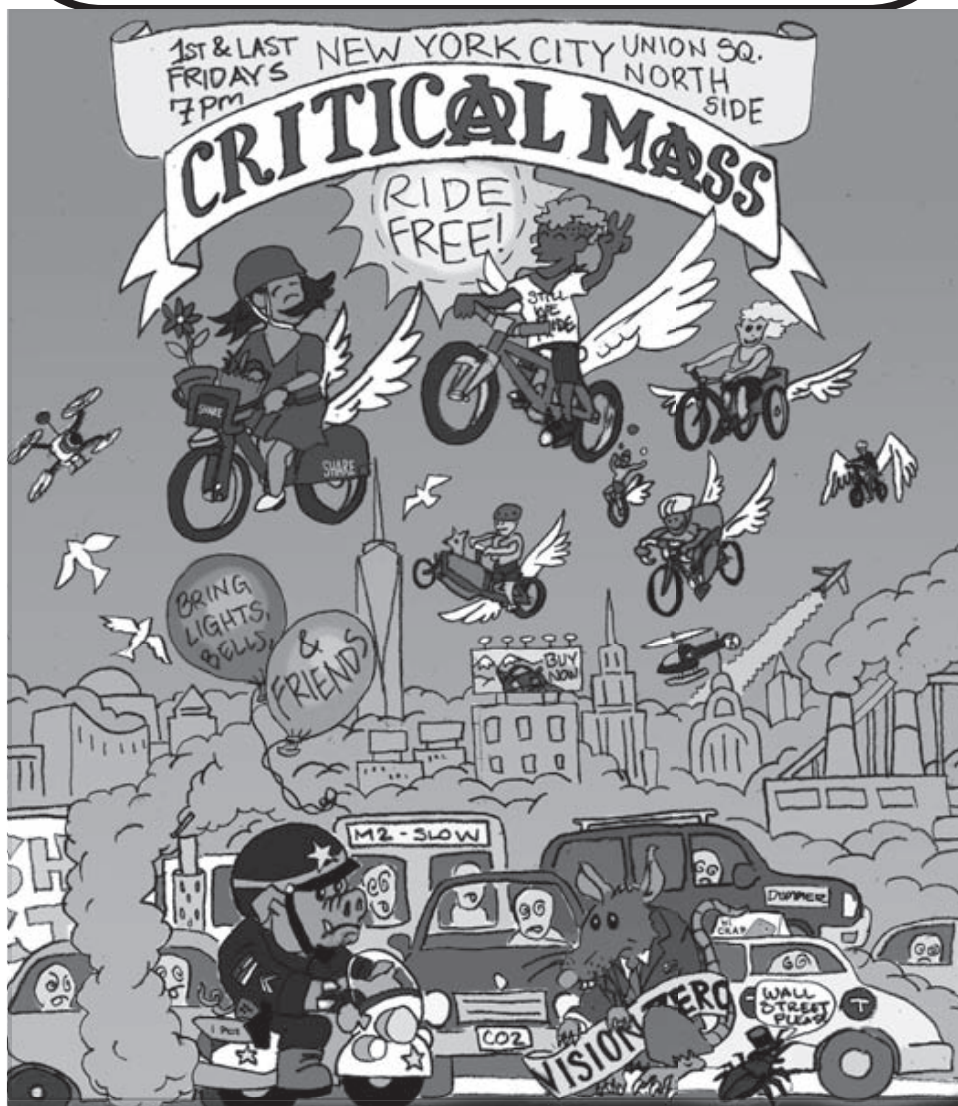
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Aguilar Library
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115th St. Library
203 W. 115th

Harlem Library
9 W. 124th St.

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Fort Washington Library
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Brooklyn Museum
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Brooklyn Library
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Key Foods
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Video Gallery
316 7th Ave.

Park Slope Library
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Pacific Street Library
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Connecticut Muffin
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Mayday Space
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Wyckoff Starr Coffee Shop
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Sunnyside Library
43-06 Greenpoint Ave.

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Jackson Heights Library
35-81 81st St.

Corona Library
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HAWKINS

Continued from page 7

to the right, and the reason is because we don't have a political party that speaks for us," Hawkins said as his audience nodded in agreement. "I think we're on the verge of something big. The question is whether there's enough time."

GREENS VS. WFP

Anti-Cuomo sentiment has been running strong on the Left all year. The labor-backed Working Families Party (WFP) briefly considered running an anti-Cuomo candidate on its ballot line in the spring. In the end it bowed to pressure from its Democratic Party allies to once again put Cuomo on its ballot line, which minor parties are allowed to do under New York election law.

"It's a way for liberals to feel good about voting for conservative Democrats," Hawkins says.

WFP's cautious decision rankled many of the party's rank and file. Party leaders insisted, however, that cutting a deal with the governor was the smart move that would give WFP more influence in a Cuomo second term.

As Hawkins fills the void on the Left, WFP now faces the prospect of being routed by a party it has long regarded as irrelevant. Cuomo's decision to bankroll the newly formed Women's Equality Party (which gave him its ballot line as well) complicates mat-

ters further. In a worst-case scenario for WFP, its vote total in the governor's race could drop below the magic threshold of 50,000 votes needed to maintain ballot status for the next four years.

"Losing to the Greens and falling down the ballot line would be a huge blow to the WFP," a former WFP staffer told *The Independent*. "It's going to be harder to strut around as the left alternative to the Democrats if they get fewer votes than the Greens."

The former WFP staffer questioned whether the Greens have the will and the organizational capacity to take advantage of a strong showing this election to build a party that can bring about real change in a state that has endured decades of misrule and corruption on the part of both Democrats and Republicans.

Hawkins will almost certainly be headed back to his overnight job at UPS. Going forward, he sees the Greens taking root as the second party to the Democrats in parts of the state and continuing to build from there. Other top state party leaders also insist that party-building work will continue after the voting is done.

"It's an incremental process," said state co-chair Michael O'Neil. "There are no overnight successes in true movement building."

Meanwhile, Hawkins hopes his days of being seen as a fringe candidate are over.

"I'm not a protest vote," he said. "People are voting for what they want. And if enough people vote for me, I will be the next governor of New York."

CLIMATE MARCH

Continued from page 9

reductions in CO2 emissions this decade. Solar, wind, other renewables and efficiency improvements — reducing the energy needed per function — are not only safer, but also faster and more affordable.

The climate movement is on the right track as it seeks to halt the expansion of fossil fuel exploration, extraction and transportation, and presses for the rapid phase-out of coal-fired power plants and other uses of carbon fuels throughout the economy.

It needs to be just as clear what it's for. This must be more than simply putting a price on carbon. Numerous studies, including those by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Ecofys looking at the global picture, as well as by Stanford engineering professor Mark Jacobson, who focused on the United States, have demonstrated the potential to phase out fossil fuels rapidly, reaching levels between 77 and 100 percent renewable by 2050. Accomplishing this, of course, requires focusing investment capital where it is most productive, and that means renewables and efficiency, not nuclear power.

Activists need to build broad coalitions to push policies that will facilitate the rapid transition to a carbon-free and nuclear-free future. The United States must follow the lead of Germany, which has committed itself to both the conversion to renewables and the phase-out of all dirty energy, including nuclear power. They're succeeding in a much less sunny and windy location. Surely the renewable-rich United States can as well, but this isn't going to happen by itself.

The climate movement needs to press for both incentives and mandates to increase investment in clean energy. The public generally supports green, renewable energy, and, when put to a vote, renewable energy standards (RES) usually score landslide wins. There is, however, growing pushback coming from the industry and Koch-funded groups including the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). They are pushing the repeal of RES laws via the so-called "Electricity Freedom Act."

Aside from seeking more green energy through stronger RES laws, and opposing ALEC, activists can:

- Support adoption of more stringent energy efficiency codes for both new

and existing buildings.

- Support net metering and feed-in tariffs incentivizing more distributed renewable generations.
- Support utility-scale renewable energy projects, including offshore wind and the wheeling of power generated in wind-rich regions, like the High Plains, via efficient high-voltage DC lines.
- Rally behind sustainable living education and projects to implement this in all aspects of life, from local food production to cycling, mass transit, eco-villages, etc.

The movement must work on public education, public policy, divestment campaigns and more to challenge the power of the fossil fuel industry, as well as to beat back false "solutions," like nuclear power, that retard our ability to effectively address the climate crisis and present their own set of serious problems.

Mark Haim serves as director of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks in Columbia, Missouri, a grassroots nonprofit that does education and advocacy at the interface of peace, justice and sustainability.

MEXICO

Continued from page 15

their grievances at the increasingly privatized public institution. Striking students at the IPN have begun to fuse with other protest movements, including those seeking justice at Ayotzinapa.

The Insurgent People's Revolutionary Army (ERPI) guerrilla group has also thrown its support behind the student teachers from Ayotzinapa and has created a special brigade to "settle accounts"

with the Guerreros Unidos criminal organization.

Thus, the political panorama of Mexico has become increasingly complex. An array of social movements and struggles are developing organic connections while corrupt and ineffective politicians offer nothing more than empty rhetoric — or worse.

For now, though, all eyes are on Guerrero, where the cry of grief and rage rings louder than ever.

An earlier version of this article appeared at socialistworker.org.

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PAINTING



COURTESY AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM VIA ESTATE OF RALPH FASANELLA

LOOKING BACK

Ralph Fasanella: *Lest We Forget*
Willem van Genk: *Mind Traffic*
BOTH AT AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM
THROUGH DECEMBER 1



COURTESY AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM VIA ESTATE OF RALPH FASANELLA

TOP: Ralph Fasanella. *New York City*, 1957. © 1957 Estate of Ralph Fasanella
BOTTOM: Willem van Genk. *Untitled (Brooklyn Bridge)*, 1960.

“They used to deliver ice on those horses.” At the Ralph Fasanella exhibition currently on view at the American Folk Art Museum, an elderly tour group reflects on the tiny details of *New York City*, a bustling 1957 painting by Fasanella made in celebration of the place where he was born, raised and lived his whole life. There are horses in the painting, and also traffic cops and switchboard operators, park benches and fire escapes, parents and children, billboards, bridges and a thousand other things.

Fasanella taught himself to paint while in his early 30s, by which point he’d already been a garment worker, a truck driver, a gas station operator and, importantly, a union organizer. His paintings seem to bear the weight of a dense and demanding life: each Fasanella canvas is its own richly populated world. Fasanella’s left-wing politics, born out of his days in the labor movement, are a deeply felt presence in his works right through *Farewell Comrade/End of the Cold War* (1993-1999), his uncompleted final painting. In it, Lenin’s oversized corpse lies surrounded by teeming crowds, and by books and placards named with progressive heroes (Upton Sinclair, Arthur Miller, Mother Jones); Gorbachev, Clinton and the Pope all make appearances; hapless subway commuters read newspapers in which political power struggles are treated as a giant ball game (“YANKS WIN BIG! USSR FALLS!”).

It would be easy, really, to dismiss much of Fasanella’s work as cutesy, sentimental nostalgia. For example: his 1970s paintings of Lawrence, Mass., depict the great workers’ strikes that happened there in 1912 — two years before he was even born. But beneath the bright colors and winsome little characters, there’s a complex, cranky and mournful political vision at work. In one 1976 painting, giant birds and

multiple grinning Nixons hover above marching protesters, a baseball diamond, candy-colored newspapers, funeral processions and a massive pink telephone. The painting’s title? *Watergate*, of course. Funereal imagery comes up a lot in these paintings, often in the form of memorials to slain civil rights leaders. Fasanella’s scenes tend to include sign-waving demonstrators, dwarfed by looming symbols of power: stately cast-iron domes, ornate church steeples and endless newspaper-headline zigzags. In a piece about the death of JFK, there’s even what looks like a combination brothel/Catholic church, manned by a congregation of robed Klansmen. In such works, it seems that Fasanella is questioning the nature of power in 20th-century America, with governmental, religious and social institutions coalescing into strange, new monsters.

Also currently on view at the museum is an exhibition showing the obsessive, explosive, oddball experiments of Willem van Genk. Like Fasanella, Genk was an old-time left-winger — though it seems he eventually grew distrustful of any ideology whatsoever — but his works do not share Fasanella’s brand of earthy humanism. Using complex collage techniques and intricate line art, van Genk shows us Soviet battleships, Eastern deities, film reels, fighter planes, locomotives and illegible bits of text; he finds a sort of raw fascination in the mechanisms of power. As a point of reference, compare Fasanella’s depiction of the Triborough Bridge — as a soft, sponge-like, pastel-colored thing — with van Genk’s *Brooklyn Bridge* (1960): hard-edged and imposing, with not a person in sight.

After decades of struggling to get his artwork shown, Fasanella eventually achieved more wide-

spread recognition. His paintings can be seen in libraries, museums and universities around the country; the city of Lawrence even declared a “Ralph Fasanella Day.” This exhibition, then, is a chance to go deeper. Beyond Fasanella’s bright colors and fun details, there’s a dark and deeply personal sort of dread. In his art, Fasanella’s wistful memories of populist glory days are offset against a forward-looking sadness, an encroaching sense of injustice and corruption in an increasingly stratified America.

Looking at *New York City*, the tour group talks about how the streets of Manhattan aren’t so different now from how Fasanella depicted them 57 years ago, except that where there used to be mom-and-pop businesses, there are now impersonal chain stores, and where there used to be working-class families, there are now luxury apartments and empty condos. Fasanella intended the painting as an apolitical homage to his hometown — it was the mid-fifties, after all, and he was getting in trouble for his Communist leanings. But even without overt political references, that old leftist populism still comes through. At a time when, it seems, so many New Yorkers are being displaced by the movements of capital, it helps to see the city envisioned as a loud, busy, colorful place, one whose life force comes from ordinary people and everyday concerns.

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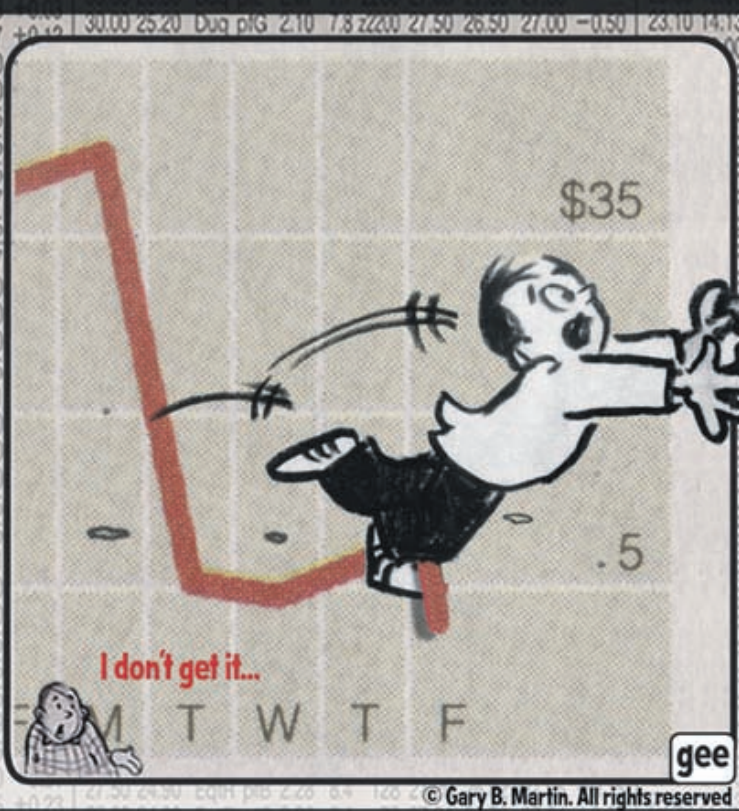
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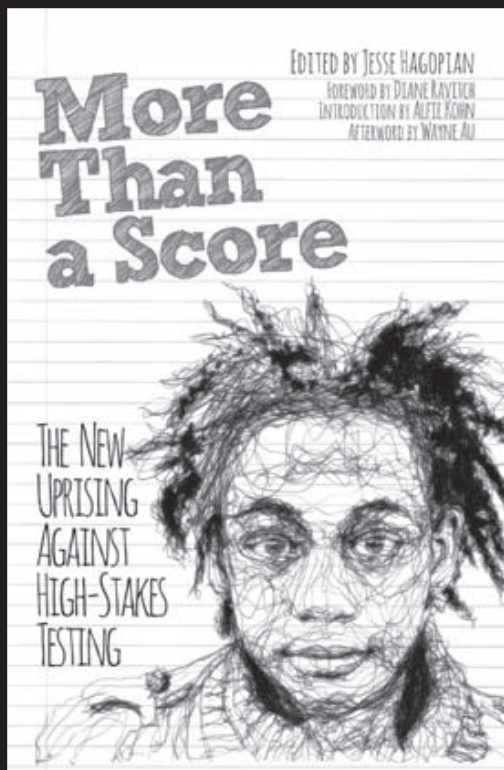


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SOCIAL MEDIA

BY ALEX ELLEFSON

The new social networking site Ello has generated an enormous amount of interest due to its promise to be ad free and not to sell user information to advertisers. Interest in the company has exploded — at one point it was the fifth hottest trend on Google — indicating there is a tremendous appetite for an alternative to social media giants like Facebook and Twitter, which endlessly monitor their users' activity and sell that data to advertisers.

"Your social network is owned by advertisers," reads Ello's manifesto, posted on its website. "Every post you share, every friend you make, and every link you follow is tracked, recorded, and converted into data. Advertisers buy your data so they can show you more ads. You are the product that's bought and sold."

Ello launched in early August as an invitation-only service and almost immediately received media attention after a group of drag queens, outraged after Facebook disabled their accounts because they were not using their real names, migrated over to Ello. The company's manifesto seemed to touch a nerve, and soon after entering the spotlight, Ello's CEO Paul Budnitz, a Vermont entrepreneur who founded a luxury bicycle shop and a toy company, reported the website was receiving 40,000 invitation requests an hour. Budnitz said that Ello will generate revenue by offering extra features, like private messaging, that users can purchase for a few dollars.

However, any hope that Ello could become a popular alternative to Facebook and provide a refuge for those seeking to escape advertisers doesn't go much further than the manifesto. At least, for now.

Social media expert Randall Craig, author of *The Everything Guide to Starting an Online Business*, told *The Independent* that social media sites need to reach a "critical mass" of users in order to be sustainable. He said that the jury was still out on whether Ello can draw in enough people to secure its future.

"There are a number of reasons why somebody goes to Facebook," said Craig. "Some people go there because they want to post pictures and share them with their friends and family. Other people like to play games like Mafia Wars and Farmville, and others like to connect with people who have common interests on Facebook pages and groups and that kind of thing. There's a lot going on."

To its credit, Ello is still in beta-testing mode, hence the invite-only policy. Budnitz told *The Independent* via email that the company's biggest challenge is trying to scale the site quickly to accommodate the increasing number of users while maintaining the existing community.

But even if the company is able to overcome the enormous challenges that face any emerging business, the social network's attempt to challenge the ubiquity of online advertising may have been dead before it left the gate.

Last month, technology blogger Andy Baio revealed that Ello accepted \$435,000 from FreshTracks Capital, a Vermont-based investment firm that manages a \$25 million portfolio of companies located in the Northeast — a detail that was left out of the manifesto.

"Unless they have a very unique relationship with their investors, Ello will inevitably be pushed towards profitability and an exit, even if it compromises their current values," Baio wrote in a post on Ello.

ELLO, GOODBYE?



GARY MARTIN

In previous interviews with the press, Budnitz insisted the venture capital would never cause his company to abandon its principles. However, a brief analysis of FreshTracks' website reveals that at least one-third of the companies listed in their portfolio were eventually acquired by larger companies. FreshTracks' website states that it expects "the sale of the portfolio company to an acquirer, however there are other possible methods of exit including recapitalizations and public offerings."

And there's a reason why venture capitalists would pressure Ello to abandon its principles — data mining and online advertising are extremely lucrative. Last year, Facebook reported total revenue of more than \$7.8 billion, while Google announced that it earned almost \$50 billion in annual revenue for 2013. Meanwhile the social media site Reddit, which has advertisements but refuses to sell its users' information, remains unprofitable despite attracting 114 million monthly users.

"I like what Ello's manifesto says but you want to know how they're going to do it," Astra Taylor, author of *The People's Platform*, a book about the inequalities that exist online, told *The Independent*. "Because you can have principles, but how do you live them? How do you support them and how do you institutionalize them so that other people can embody those principles?"

Taylor explained that there are hidden costs to online advertising and data mining. The practice allows for new avenues of discrimination and exploitation.

For instance, in 2008 a man returned from his honeymoon in Jamaica to find a letter from American Express that said his credit limit had been reduced from \$10,800 to \$3,800. Although he had an excellent credit score, the company explained that it had taken the action because he had recently used his card at businesses whose patrons have a poor repayment history with American Express.

Taylor said that publicly supported Internet companies, similar to the non-commercial media companies that were created before the Internet, could open the door to a more democratic and equitable web.

"With Ello, we have a desire and we have an alternative that's probably going to have a hard time sustaining itself and still public subsidies are way off the table. Why can't we have this conversation?" she said.

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